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district. The Lyngngams inhabit the western portion of the Khasi Hills proper. A line drawn north and south through the village of Nongtoin may be said to form their eastern boundary, and the Kamrup and Sylhet districts their northern and southern boundaries, respectively. The people known as *Bhois* in these hills, who are many of them really Mikirs, live in the low hills to the north and north-east of the district, the term "Bhoi" being a territorial name rather than tribal. The eastern boundary of the Lyngngam country may be said to form their north-western boundary. The Wárs inhabit the precipitous slopes and deep valleys to the south of the district. Their country extends along the entire southern boundary of the district to the Jadukata, or Kenchi-iong, river where the Lyngngam territory may be said to commence towards the south. There are some Hadem colonies in the extreme eastern portions of the Jaintia Hills. It is these colonies which are sometimes referred to by other writers as "Kuki Colonies." They are settlers from the North Cachar Sub-division of the Cachar district within recent years. It is possible that the title Hadem may have some connection with *Hidimba*, the ancient name for the North Cachar Hills.

APPEARANCE.

The colour of the Khasi skin may be described as being usually brown, varying from dark to a light yellowish brown, according to locality. The complexion of the people who inhabit the uplands is of a somewhat lighter shade, and many of the women, especially those who live at Nongkrem, Laitlyngkot, Mawphlang, and other villages of the surrounding high plateaux, possess that pretty gipsy complexion that is seen in the South of Europe amongst the peasants. The people of Cherrapunji village are specially fair. The Syntengs of the Jaintia Hills are darker than the Khasi uplanders. The Wárs who live in the low valleys are frequently more swarthy than the Khasis. The Bhois have the flabby-looking yellow skin of the Mikirs, and the Lyngngams are darker than the Khasis. The Lyngngams are probably the darkest complexioned people in the

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Garo Hills	117
Manipur	69
Total	4,091*

The following information regarding the general aspect of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district, with some additions, is derived from Sir William Hunter's Statistical Account of Assam. The district consists almost entirely of hills, only a very small portion lying in the plains. The slope of the hills on the southern side is very steep until a table-land is met with at an elevation of about 4,000 feet at Cherrapunji. Higher up there is another plateau at Mawphlang. This is the highest portion of the hills, some villages being found at as high an elevation as close on 6,000 feet above sea level. Fifteen miles to the east of Mawphlang, and in the same range, is situated the civil station of Shillong, at an average elevation of about 4,900 feet. The elevation of the Shillong Peak, the highest hill in the district, is 6,450 feet above sea level. On the northern side of the hills are two plateaux, one between 1,000 and 2,000 feet below the level of Shillong, and another at an elevation of about 2,000 feet above sea level. In general features all these plateaux are much alike, and consist of a succession of undulating downs, broken here and there by the valleys of the larger hill streams. In the higher ranges, where the hills have been denuded of forest, the country is covered with short grass, which becomes longer and more rank in the lower elevations. This denudation of forest has been largely due to the wood being used by the Khasis for fuel for iron smelting in days gone by. The Government, however, has taken steps to protect the remaining forests from further spoliation. A remarkable feature is the presence of numerous sacred groves situated generally just below the brows of the hills. In these woods are to be found principally oak and rhododendron trees. The fir-tree (Pinus Khasia) is first met with on the road from Gauhati to Shillong, at Umsning, at an elevation of about 2,500 feet. In the neighbourhood of Shillong the fir grows profusely, but the finest fir-trees are to be seen

* The figures for Khasi population in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district will be found under "Habitat."

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limestone caves and underground water-courses on the southern face of the hills. This series contains coal-beds, e.g. the Cherrafield and that at Lakadong in the Jaintia Hills. Some description of the remarkable Kyllang Rock may not be out of place. Sir Joseph Hooker describes it as a dome of red granite, 5,400 feet above sea level, accessible from the north and east, but almost perpendicular to the southward where the slope is 80° for 600 feet. The elevation is said by Hooker to be 400 feet above the mean level of the surrounding ridges and 700 feet above the bottom of the valleys. The south or steepest side is encumbered with enormous detached blocks, while the north is clothed with forests containing red tree-rhododendrons and oaks. Hooker says that on its skirts grows a "white bushy rhododendron" which he found nowhere else. There is, however, a specimen of it now in the Shillong Lake garden. Numerous orchids are to be found in the Kyllang wood, notably a beautiful white one, called by the Khasis *u'tiw kyllang synrai*, which blooms in the autumn. The view from the top of the rock is very extensive, especially towards the north, where a magnificent panorama of the Himalayas is obtained in the autumn. The most remarkable phenomenon of any kind in the country is undoubtedly the enormous quantity of rain which falls at Cherrapunji.* Practically the whole of the rainfall occurs in the rains, i.e. from May to October. The remainder of the district is less rainy. The climate of the central plateau of the Shillong range is very salubrious, but the low hills in parts of the district are malarious. The effect of the different climates can at once be seen by examining the physique of the inhabitants. The Khasis who live in the high central plateaux are exceptionally healthy and strong, but those who live in the unhealthy "Bhoi country" to the north, and in the Lynngam portion to the west of the district, are often stunted and sickly. Not so, however, the Wars who live on the southern slopes, for although their country is very hot at certain times of the year, it does not appear to be abnormally unhealthy except in certain

* The average rainfall at the Cherrapunji Police Station during the last twenty years, from figures obtained from the office of the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, has been 448 inches. The greatest rainfall registered in any one year during the period was in 1899, when it amounted to 641 inches.

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147 villages, such as Shella, Borpunji, Umniuh, and in Narpuh in
132 the Jaintia Hills.
361

ORIGIN.

173 The origin of the Khasis is a very vexed question. Although it is probable that the Khasis have inhabited their present abode for at any rate a considerable period, there seems to be a fairly general belief amongst them that they originally came from elsewhere. The Rev. H. Roberts, in the introduction to his Khasi Grammar, states that "tradition, such as it is, connects them politically with the Burmese, to whose king they were up to a comparatively recent date rendering homage, by sending him an annual tribute in the shape of an axe, as an emblem merely of submission." Another tradition points out the north as the direction from which they migrated, and Sylhet as the terminus of their wanderings, from which they were ultimately driven back into their present hill fastnesses by a great flood, after a more or less peaceful occupation of that district. It was on the occasion of this great flood, the legend runs, that the Khasi lost the art of writing, the Khasi losing his book whilst he was swimming at the time of this flood, whereas the Bengali managed to preserve his. Owing to the Khasis having possessed no written character before the advent of the Welsh missionaries, there are no histories as is the case with the Ahoms of the Assam Valley, and therefore no record of their journeys.

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114 Mr. Shadwell, the oldest living authority we have on the
173 Khasis, and one who has been in close touch with the people for more than half a century, mentions a tradition amongst them that they originally came into Assam from Burma *viâ* the Patkoi range, having followed the route of one of the Burmese invasions. Mr. Shadwell has heard them mention the name Patkoi as a hill they met with on their journey. All this sort of

144 thing is, however, inexpressibly vague. In the chapter dealing
173 with "Affinities" have been given some reasons for supposing that the Khasis and other tribes of the Mon-Anam family, originally occupied a large portion of the Indian continent. Where the actual cradle of the Mon-Anam race was, is as

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or official spokesman of the Siem's Durbar. Another post of oak in this house is furnished by the people of the State.

The houses of the well-to-do Khasis of the present day in Mawkhar and Cherrapunji are built after the modern style with iron roofs, chimneys, glass windows and doors. In Jowai the well-to-do traders have excellent houses of the European pattern, which are as comfortable as many of the European subordinates' quarters in Shillong. Some up-to-date families in Shillong and at Cherra allow themselves muslin curtains and European furniture.

The houses of the Pnar-Wárs are peculiar. The roof, which is thatched with the leaves of a palm called *u tynriew*, is hog-backed and the eaves come down almost to the ground. There are three rooms in the Wár as in the Khasi house, although called by different names in the Wár dialect. The hearth is in the centre room. The houses are built flush with the ground and are made of bamboos. In the Wár villages of Nongjri and Umniuh there are small houses erected in the compounds of the ordinary dwelling-houses called *ieng ksuid* (spirit houses). In these houses offerings to the spirits of departed family ancestors are placed at intervals, this practice being very similar to the more ancient form of Shintoism. In some Wár villages there are also separate bachelors' quarters. This custom is in accordance with that of the Naga tribes. There is no such custom amongst the Khasi Uplanders. The Wár houses are similar to those of the Pnar Wárs, except that a portion of the house is generally built on a platform, the main house resting on the hill-side and the portion on the platform projecting therefrom, the object being to obtain more space, the area for houses in the village sites being often limited owing to the steepness of the hill-sides.

The Bhoi and Lynngam houses are practically similar, and may be described together. They are generally built on fairly high platforms of bamboo, are frequently 30 to 40 ft. in length, and are divided into various compartments in order to suit the needs of the family. The hearth, which is of earth, is in the centre room. There is a platform at the back of the Lynngam house, and in front of the Bhoi house, used for drying paddy, spreading chillies, &c., and for sitting on when the day's

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work is done. In order to ascend to a Bhoi house, you have to climb up a notched pole. The Bhois sacrifice a he-goat and a fowl to *Rèk-ànglong* (Khasi, *Ramiew iing*), the household god, when they build a new house.

VILLAGES.

Unlike the Nagas and Kukis, the Khasis do not build their villages on the extreme summits of hills, but a little below the tops, generally in small depressions, in order to obtain some protection from the strong winds and storms which prevail in these hills at certain times of the year. According to the late U Jeebon Roy, it is *sang*, or taboo, to the Khasis to build a house on the last eminence of a range of hills, this custom having perhaps arisen owing to the necessity of locating villages with reference to their defence against an enemy. Khasis build their houses fairly close together, but not as close as houses in the Bhoi and Lynngam villages. Khasis seldom change the sites of their villages, to which they are very much attached, where, as a rule, the family tombs are standing and the *maiwbynna* or memorial stones. In many villages stone cromlechs and memorial stones are to be seen which from their appearance show that the villages have been there for many generations. During the Jaintia rebellion the village of Jowai was almost entirely destroyed, but as soon as the rebellion was over the people returned to the old site and rebuilt their village. Similarly, after the earthquake, the ancient village sites were not abandoned in many cases, but the people rebuilt their houses in their former positions, although in Shillong and Cherrapunji they rebuilt the walls of the houses of wooden materials instead of stone. There is no such thing as a specially reserved area in the village for the Siem and the nobility, all the people, rich or poor, living together in one village, their houses being scattered about indiscriminately. To the democratic Khasi the idea of the Siem living apart from his people would be repugnant. In the vicinity of the Khasi village, often just below the brow of the hill to the leeward side, are to be seen dark woods of oak

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and other trees. These are the sacred groves. Here the villagers worship *U ryngkew U basa*, the tutelary deity of the village. These groves are taboo, and it is an offence to cut trees therein for any purpose other than for performing funeral obsequies. The groves are generally not more than a few hundred yards away from the villages. The villages of the Syntengs are similar in character to those of the Khasis. The Wár villages nestle on the hill-sides of the southern border, and are to be seen peeping out from the green foliage with which the southern slopes are clad. In the vicinity of, and actually up to the houses, in the Wár villages, are to be observed large groves of areca-nut, often twined with the *pan* creeper, and of plantain trees, which much enhance the beauty of the scene. Looking at a Wár village from a distance, a darker shade of green is seen; this denotes the limits of the extensive groves where the justly celebrated Khasi orange is grown, which is the source of so much profit to these people. The houses in the Wár villages are generally closer together than those of the Khasis, probably owing to space being limited, and to the villages being located on the slopes of hills. Generally up the narrow village streets and from house to house, there are rough steep stone steps, the upper portion of a village being frequently situated at as high an elevation as 200 to 300 ft. above the lower. In a convenient spot in a Wár village a clear space is to be seen neatly swept and kept free from weeds, and surrounded with a stone wall, where the village tribunals sit, and the elders meet in solemn conclave. Dances also are held here on festive occasions. At Nongjri village there is a fine rubber tree, under whose hollow trunk there are certain sacred stones where the priest performs the village ceremonies.

The Bhoi and Lynngam villages are built in small clearings in the forest, the houses are close together and are built often in parallel lines, a fairly broad space being reserved between the lines of houses to serve as a street. One misses the pretty gardens of the Wár villages, for Bhois and Lynngams attempt nothing of the sort, probably because, unlike the Khasi, a Bhoi or Lynngam village never remains more than two or three years in one spot; generally the villages of these people are in the vicinity of the forest clearings, sometimes actually in the midst

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of them, more especially when the latter are situated in places where jungle is dense, and there is fear of attacks from wild animals. In the Lynngam village is to be seen a high bamboo platform some 20 to 30 ft. from the ground, built in the midst of the village, where the elders sit and gossip in the evening. 361

All the villages, Khasi, Wár, Lynngam and Bhoi, swarm with pigs, which run about the villages unchecked. The pigs feed on all kinds of filth, and in addition are fed upon the wort and spent wash of the brewings of country spirit, or rice beer, the latter being carefully collected and poured into wooden troughs. The pigs are of the usual black description seen in India. They thrive greatly in the Khasi villages, and frequently attain extreme obesity. 361 231 274

In the Khasi villages of the high plateaux are often nowadays potato gardens, the latter being carefully protected from the inroads of pigs, calves, and goats by dry dikes surmounted by hedges. 24[illegible] 417

I noticed an interesting custom at a Bhoi village in Nongpoh of barricading the path leading to the village from the forest with bamboo palisading and bamboo *chevaux de frise* to keep out the demon of cholera. In the middle of the barricade there was a wooden door over which was nailed the skull of a monkey which had been sacrificed to this demon, which is, as amongst the Syntengs, called *khlam*. 757 776 782

FURNITURE AND HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS.

As in the case of houses, so with reference to furniture, the influence of civilization shows many changes. The Khasi of the present day who lives in Mawkhar * has a comfortable house regularly divided up into rooms in the European style with even some European articles of furniture, but owing probably to the influence of the women, he still possesses several of the articles of furniture which are to be met with in the houses of those who still observe the old style of living. Let us take the furniture of the kitchen to begin with. Above the hearth is slung by ropes of cane a swinging wooden framework 352 352 417

* Mawkhar is a suburb of Shillong, the headquarters station.

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played with a little wooden key held in the hand. *Ka maryngod* is an instrument much the same as the last, but is played with a bow like a violin. *Ka marynthing* is a kind of guitar with one string, played with the finger.

Ka tángmuri is a wooden pipe, which is played like a flageolet. *Ka kynsháw*, or *shákuriaw*, are cymbals made of bell metal; *ka shárâti*, or *ka shingwiang*, is a kind of flute made of bamboo. This instrument is played at cremation ceremonies, and when the bones and ashes of a clan are collected and placed in the family tomb, or *máwbah*. This flute is not played on ordinary occasions. In the folk-lore portion of the Monograph will be found a tale regarding it. There are other kinds of flutes which are played on ordinary occasions. The Wárs of the twenty-five villages in the Khyrim State make a sort of harp out of reed, which is called *ka 'sing ding phong*. The Khasis also play a Jews' harp (*ka mieng*), which is made of bamboo.

AGRICULTURE.

The Khasis are industrious cultivators, although they are behindhand in some of their methods of cultivation, (e.g. their failure to adopt the use of the plough in the greater portion of the district); they are thoroughly aware of the uses of manures. Their system of turning the sods, allowing them to dry, then burning them, and raking the ashes over the soil, is much in advance of any system of natural manuring to be seen elsewhere in the Province. The Khasis use the following agricultural implements:—A large hoe (*mokhíw heh*), an axe for felling trees (*u sdie*), a large da for felling trees (*ka wait lynngam*), two kinds of bill-hooks (*ka wáit prat* and *ka wáit khmut*), a sickle (*ka ráshi*), a plough in parts of the Jaintia Hills (*ka lyngkor*), also a harrow (*ka iuh moi*). In dealing with agriculture, the lands of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills may be divided into the following classes:—(*a*) Forest land, (*b*) wet paddy land called *háli* or *pynthor*, (*c*) high grass land or *ka ri lúm* or *ka ri phlang*, (*d*) homestead land (*ka 'dew kypér*). Forest lands are cleared by the process known as *jhuming*, the trees being felled early in the winter and allowed to lie till January or February,

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wonderful mass of granite known by the name of the Kyllang Rock will be found in the section of the monograph which deals with geographical distribution. I have also added a photograph of the rock. The Syntengs have a story that when the strong west wind blows in the spring this is due to the advent of *U Kyllang*, who comes to visit his wife, the river *Umngot*, at that season: amongst the Khasis hills are all of them masculine, but to rivers is usually attributed the feminine gender. U Symper is another isolated rocky eminence rising from the Maharam plain close to the village of K'mawan. The best view of the hill is obtainable from Laitmawsiang on the path to Mawsynram. The village of Mawsmai every traveller from Therria to Cherrapunji knows. It is chiefly remarkable for a fairly large limestone cave, and its fine memorial stones. The Khasi theory to explain how the moon got its spots is, I believe, original, but is no more extraordinary than our own nursery tale about the "man in the moon." The *Sohpet Byneng* hill is the first hill of any size that the traveller sees on the Gauhati road when journeying to Shillong. It is close to Umsning Dak Bungalow. There are caves in the hill which are tenanted by bears. Strange to say, according to Khasi ideas, this is one of the highest points in the hills; in reality *Sophet Byneng* is some 2,000 ft. lower than the Shillong Peak. As mentioned elsewhere, the Khasis are very fond of dogs; so I have given their version of how the dog came to live with man. The well-known *thlen* superstition will be found fully described under the heading of "Human sacrifices." I have, however, thought the tale of sufficient interest to reproduce at length here. The story of the river Rupatylli is a pretty tale, and is just such a one as would appeal to the imagination of mountaineers like the Khasis. The Kopili story is important, in that it indicates the origin of human sacrifices in the Jaintia Hills; it also throws, perhaps, some light on the question of the use to which the flat table memorial stones were put in years gone by. The superstition about the crossing of the Kopili can be vouched for by many who have taken the journey from the Jaintia Hills to North Cachar by the Kopili route. Mawpunkyrtiang is a small village close to Cherrapunji. The weird tale about the Siem of Malyniang is the pride of the Maskut people, for in olden days their King,

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Khasi Hills.	Jaintia Hills.
1. Lynkah (Barpani or Khawang)	Kyllao. (Suhtnga).
2. Nongkrem	Pynsing.
3. Um-long (Maolong the hat at Laban)	Maolong. (Nartiang).
4. Ranghep (Jeu-bah at Cherra) (Mawtawar in Mylliem) (Unsaw in Nongkhlaw)	Maosiang. (Jowai).
5. Shillong (Laitlyngkot)	Maoshai. (Shangpung).
6. Pomtih or Pomtiah (Mawkhar, small market)	Pynkat. (Mynso).
7. Umnih	Thym-blein.
8. Yeo-duh (Mawkhar, large market)	Ka-hat. (Jaintiapur).

In the War country, markets are usually held every fourth day, e.g. at Nongjri, Mawbang, Tyllap, and Shella. At Theria the market is held every Friday, and at Hat-majai, or Bholagunj, every Tuesday.

THE LYNNGAMS.

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[341]
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Although mention has been made incidentally in various parts of this monograph of Lynngam customs, it has been thought necessary to give the Lynngams a separate chapter, as these people differ so very greatly from the Khasis in their manner of life, and in their customs. *Lynngam* is the Khasi name: the Garo name for the Lynngams is *Megam*. There are several *Megam* villages in the north-eastern corner of the Garo Hills district, and there is regular communication kept up between these villages and the Lynngam inhabitants of the Khasi Hills district. The Lynngams must not be confused with the *Hájó* or *Námdaniya* Garos who inhabit the low hills to the north of the Khasi Hills district, and are called by the Khasis *Dko*. All Lynngams claim to be Khasis, they dislike being called Garos; but although it is true they speak what may be called a dialect of Khasi, and observe some of the Khasi customs, the Lynngams are more Garo than Khasi. Before proceeding further, it should be stated that the Assamese of Boko call the Lynngams *Núniyá* Garos, all hill people being Garos to the Assamese of that region, without distinction

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or difference. It is owing to these three different names being used for the same people that there has been so much confusion about Lynngams previously; e.g. at one census they were named *Lynngam*, at another they received the appellation of Garo, and at a third enumeration they were called Khasis. In Section I. the habitat of the Lynngams has been roughly defined. It is impossible to define the Lynngam country exactly, because these people are continually shifting their village sites owing to the exigencies of *jhum* cultivation, which has been described in Section II. Some of the Lynngams preserve a tradition that they originally came from the Kamrup plains. It is interesting that a people, like the Garos in so many respects, should have the same idea as the Garos as to the hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra not always having been their abode. The Garo legend is that they dwelt for some years in the Goalpara and Kamrup plains after they descended from Thibet, and before they moved to the Garo Hills; and there is unmistakable evidence of their occupation of both districts in the shape of certain Garo villages on both banks of the Brahmaputra for some little distance up the river. If, as I suspect, the Lynngams are an offshoot of the Garos, it is, perhaps, possible that they entered the Khasi Hills much in the same way as the Garos entered the hill district to which they have given their name. The Lynngams are much darker than the Khasis, and possess the Thibeto-Burman type of feature often to a marked degree. It is not extraordinary that they should have adopted some of the Khasi customs, for the Khasis, being the stronger people, would in course of time be bound to influence them in this respect. That the Lynngams observe the matriarchate and erect (some clans) memorial stones is not peculiar, because the Garos, like the Khasis, are also a matriarchal people (to a limited degree), and the custom of erecting memorial stones is not confined to the Khasis, for other hill tribes in Assam observe the practice, e.g. certain Naga tribes and the Mikirs; and the Garos themselves put up carved posts, called *kima*, in honour of the departed. Although there is not much intermarriage between the Khasis and the Lynngams nowadays, perhaps in days gone by there was a mixture of blood, the result being the hybrid race we are now consider-

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custom of their own from cultivating the *landoo*, in which case they plant certain other trees favourable to the growth of the lac insect. The villages are situated near their patches of cultivation in the forest. The villages are constantly shifting, owing to the necessity of burning fresh tracts of forest every two years. The houses are entirely built of bamboo, and, for such temporary structures, are very well built. In front, the houses are raised some 3 or 4 ft. from the ground on platforms, being generally built on the side of a fairly steep hill, one end of the house resting on the ground, and the other on bamboo posts. The back end of the house is sometimes some 8 or 9 ft. from the ground. At the end of the house farthest away from the village path is a platform used for sitting out in the evening, and for spreading chillies and other articles to dry. Some Lynngam houses have only one room in which men, women, and children are all huddled together, the hearth being in the centre, and, underneath the platform, the pigs. Well-to-do people, however, possess a retiring room, where husband and wife sleep. A house I measured at Nongsohlar village was of the following dimensions:—Length, 42 ft.; breadth, 16 ft.; height of house from the ground to the eaves, front, 9 ft.; back 18 ft. Houses are built with a portion of the thatch hanging over the eaves in front. No explanation could be given me for this. It is probably a Garo custom. In some Lynngam villages there are houses in the centre of the village where the young unmarried men sleep, where male guests are accommodated, and where the village festivities go on. These are similar to the *dekachang* or bachelors' club-houses of the Mikirs, Garos, and Lalungs, and to the *morang* of the Nagas. This is a custom of the Thibeto-Burman tribes in Assam, and is not a Khasi institution. There are also high platforms, some 12 ft. or 15 ft. in height, in Lynngam villages, where the elders sit of an evening in the hot weather and take the air. Lynngam houses and villages are usually much cleaner than the ordinary Khasi villages, and although the Lynngams keep pigs, they do not seem to be so much *en évidence* as in the Khasi village. There is little or no furniture in a Lynngam house. The Lynngam sleeps on a mat on the floor, and in cold weather covers himself with a

Third Burial Place

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[140a] The Village Raliang

482 laden themselves with more than 80 to 85 pounds.

484 Many Khasi have to start during the afternoon because of the great distance to the market. They spend the night with acquaintances. In the dark [706] they march by torch light. The torches consist of several igra, i.e., very thin bamboo tube, saturated with petroleum and lighted. Or a large bamboo tube is filled with cloth that has been saturated in petroleum. The burning torches are swung in circles while the Khasi march so that only a glow is provided, but this prevents the torches from going out. The glow is quite sufficient for giving enough light for the road (foot path).

[276] Betel nuts are chewed (4) all the way and

4. The length of the road is also measured in "betel nuts."

water pipes are smoked during the rests.

443 b) The Market Place. It is not possible
●361 to talk about a definite place where the Khasi usually hold the market. This varies considerably according to the region. First of all the place chosen for the market lies outside the village. By preference they hold their markets on high ground or some such safe place.
[778] A place that has once been chosen remains the market place for that particular village. The market place is often found very close to the memorial stones, just as if the spirits of the ancestors honored there should offer aid and protection to the visitors to the market. On the southern slopes of the Khasi Mountains the market is often held on the bank of a river, for the reason that the Khasi come to these markets in boats. The market place in Maukhlein is quite isolated. Also the one in

Laban, but there is a small wood near there. 443
The market place is also often found under 361
trees, at the edge of a forest or near the
memorial stones.

c) Market Huts. Usually the market is 443
held in the open air. Grass offers places 347
to sit as well as places for laying out the
wares. But in many places there are also
market halls or market huts. These are
simple halls, open on all sides, made with a
framework of bamboo poles and a roof of
straw or palm leaves. The market huts or
market halls are built with square corners
and have gabled roofs. They offer the women
sellers protection from the sun or rain only,
but no other comforts. Neither tables nor
chairs nor other arrangements for displaying
wares are there. On the side where the wind
blows these market halls are often covered
with bamboo mats.

d) Choosing the Place for Selling. 443
The choice of the place for selling is left 462
up to the seller. Yet a certain division can
be recognized at every market. This division
could be called a division according to sex.
In the middle the food stuffs are usually
sold which the women take care of. Utensils
and cattle which are the business of the men,
are sold at the edges. Therefore there is a
definite arrangement to the market which is
taken for granted by the Khasi: in the middle
the women, outside the men (there is a similar
order for the dance: in the middle the feminine
sex, outside the masculine sex). The indivi-
dual types of wares have /707/ their definite
places, although individual sellers are not
assigned definite places.

The women settle down at any place that 443
seems good to them after their arrival at the
market. They spread out in front of them the

8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR7 Khasi AR7

291 small kilt), and a cap which is peaked in front and which comes down well over the ears, called *(ka tupia shkor)* ear cap. The dress of the Khasi females is somewhat different from that of the Synteng, the former wears a striped cloth tied round the waist, hanging down to the knees, and another cloth, with a fringed border, knotted on both the shoulders to cover the bust and a narrow cloth, called *ka jympien*, to serve the purpose of under-clothing. A cloth knotted in front is also worn like a cloak over shoulders. The Synteng woman wears a cloth smoothed round the body fastened above the bust and drooping down to the ankles. Another cloth is thrown over the shoulders, and crossed in front. Both Khasi and Synteng women wear a cloth tied over the head, called *ka tap mohkhlieh*. Up-to-date Khasi males wear knicker-
292 bockers, stockings, and boots, and females chemises. On festive occasions, both Khasis and Syntengs, males and females, wear expensive silks, with earrings of gold or silver. There is a special dancing-dress of
301 elaborate pattern: The women at festivals wear a circlet of silver with a spear-head ornament behind, rising 4 or 5 inches from the back of the head. Large coral beads are much valued, and necklaces of alternate beads of coral and gold, and sometimes of coral alone, are worn by the chiefs and their principal followers. Such necklaces are worn by
262 women also on *gala* occasions. The staple diet of both Khasis and Syntengs is rice and dried fish. They are, however, fond of all kinds of meat, especially pork. Some of the Syntengs abstain from beef,
[77] owing no doubt to Hindu influences. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs eat dog, which is partaken of with zest by the Naga and the Garo tribes,—this is owing to the dog being considered by the Khasis to be the friend of man. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs use milk, the latter being thought by them to be an excrement. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs
411 tattoo. The weapons of both Khasis and Syntengs are bows and arrows, swords and shields. The national game of the Khasis is archery, regarding which a detailed description will be found in paragraph 10.

● 361 The people live in regular villages on fixed sites which have not changed for generations,—and they appear to be much attached to these sites, where, as a rule, the family tombs are standing. The houses are
342 built in the shape of a shell, the houses being divided into three compartments,—the *Shyngkup*, or porch, where odds and ends, and sometimes fowls, are kept; *nengpei*, or centre room, which is used for cooking and sitting in; and *rumpei*, or inner room, where the people sleep. The houses are low, with grass roofs reaching nearly to the ground, the beams are of hewn timber, the walls are of either planks roughly hewn or of reeds or split bamboos plastered with clay. The Khasis' houses generally have boarded floors raised some feet from the ground level,

lk Chattopadhyay E-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

[p. 1]

KHASI KINSHIP AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

BY

PROF. K P. CHATTOPADHYAY.

Introduction

114 121 In a paper on Khasi marriage rules Prof. Hodson has tried to explain the special features of the Khasi kinship terms and marriage rules on the hypothesis of a former dual division of Khasi Society, and certain new social forces which came into operation when the dual society broke up (1).

Hodson used for his work, the kinship terms noted in the Assam Census Report (2), Gurdon's work on Khasis (3) and a dictionary by U. Nissorsing. A full list of Khasi kinship terms was published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy shortly afterwards (4). The list is stated to have been compiled with the help of the ex- Siem of Cherra, on the genealogical method. The genealogies have not however been printed, and detailed notes are not available.

Recently the writer of this paper proceeded to the village of Mawphlang, the head-quarters of the Khasi State of this name and collected a certain amount of data to discuss this problem. The village is situated to the southwest of Shillong, at a distance of sixteen miles, and has preserved the old customs to a fair extent. It is ruled over by a lyngdoh or priest-chief, assisted by four myntris. At the time of the visit, the lyngdoh was away, suspended by the Political Agent for misgovernment, and the powers of the State were vested in the council of myntris. The senior myntri U Subu Rai, who is an old man

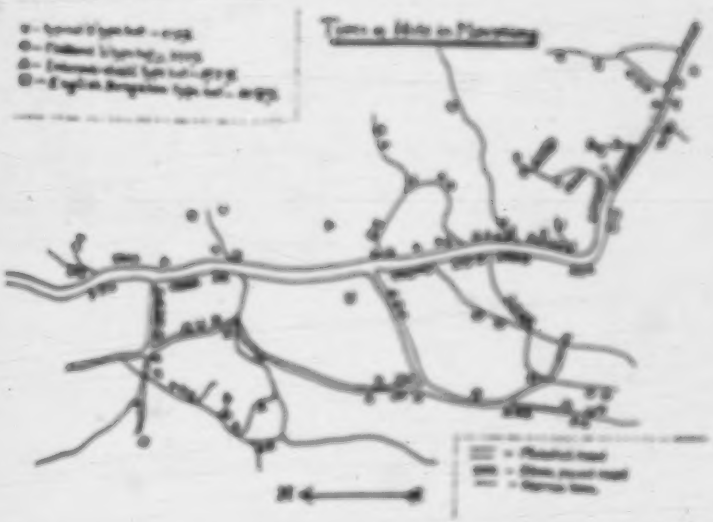
602 [361]

[this Source has been processed for the AR7 Khasi file — Analyst.]

12 Mukherjee et al. I-4, 5 (1940) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

342 huts the ground plan is entirely rectangular. In this type of huts the materials used are also different, the corrugated sheets and wooden planks being more used than blocks of stone and thatching grass. The inner apartments, however, conform to the old plan. In the market place of the village there are some houses which are two-storied, the front of the ground floor of which have been utilised for shops. These houses do not at all conform to the old 'U'-type but are square or rectangular in
342 ground plan. Near the market place there are three houses
177 of well-to-do Khasis which resemble the bungalows of Europeans of Shillong (and of the Mission house at Mawphlang) in their structure and material. In these modern houses unlike the old ones the main door faces the street. The myntr U. Suburai who is one of the well-to-do persons of Mawphlang village has his old house (that is, the old house he put up for his wife after marriage) of the 'U'-type, the description of which has been given in the preceding table under the name of the owner, the wife of U Suburai, Ka Shyrngeh. But their new house which has been added to their old one in front of it is altogether of the bungalow type. This new house is entered from a porch in front, leading to the central room which is used as parlour. The myntri generally sits here with his friends, round the fire-place, which is not a Dypei but a hearth in European style. The kitchen is beyond this room. Bed-rooms open from the drawing room to the sides.

342 A plan of the village showing the distribution of the various
●361 types of hut in Mawphlang is given below. From the plan it
177 will be found that out of the 160 houses in the village, inhabited at present, the typical 'U'-type of huts form about 11·3 per cent.; the flattened 'U'-type about 35·0 per cent.; the intermediate type, which has totally given up the 'U'-shaped ground plan but has its interior of the old type, about 27·5 per cent. and the English bungalow type about 26·2 per cent. This data shows how rapidly the old type of Khasi hut is now changing.



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177

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

I. Setting and Economic Background of Sohkynduh and Kongton

Sohkynduh and Kongton are villages of the Kadashinong,[1] one of the areas under the Cherra Chief. The Kadashinong is situated on the southern slope of the Khasi Hills, in what is called War country. These two villages are situated at the farthest point from both Shella, the centre bordered by the plain, and Cherrapunjee, the seat of the Cherra Chief, one of the centres of the upland Khasi Hills. The people at Cherrapunjee say that these villages are one of the most backward parts of the Khasi Hills. They correspond to Rombagiri in the Garo Hills, as they lie in the innermost parts and more traditional economic and social settings have been preserved there than in other villages. These are also the reasons why I selected those villages as my field.

It is nine miles to Sohkynduh from Cherrapunjee, crossing two deep valleys towards the east. Kongton is located at the heart of the mountain ranges, ten miles from Cherrapunjee, towards the north-east. It is about twelve miles from Sohkynduh to Kongton, and the way leads through one of the most difficult passes, where even villagers seldom travel. In December, 1955, Sohkynduh was a community of 48 households (List 6), and Kongton of 62 households (List 9). The settlements of both villages are clustered in the southern depressions of a mountain, not far from the summit, a typical location of Khasi villages. Sohkynduh has poor soil, covered with plenty of pieces of stones. The yield therefore is very poor. On the other hand, Kongton, a much older village, enjoys fertile soil, and is one of the most prosperous communities in the Kadashinong.

The major economy of both villages is shifting cultivation. We have already seen, in the chapters on the Garo, the fundamental technique of "Jhuming cultivation." The differences between the Garo and the Khasi shifting cultivation are to be found in two aspects: one is the nature of the crops and the other is the type of landownership. In this area, the main crop is millet, while that of the Garo is rice. Besides the shifting cultivation, the Khasi have pan-leaf gardens and sometimes pineapple gardens, though on a small scale and not in every household. The most important feature of Khasi shifting cultivation is the development of private ownership. In the tribal areas in Assam, such private ownership of the jhum field is quite an

1. Kadashinong is the name of a group of villages. Its literal meaning is "twelve villages," and it comprises the following villages: Sohkynduh, Ryumai, Mawhaoom, Mawshiet, Mawmang, Kongton, Shyntiang, Kyhiawbiar, Pdei, Tyndun, Nongpriang, and Dongpaw. (Khasi spelling follows the customary usage in Cherra State.)

thereafter, the British negotiated treaties with all the Khasi states, the last treaty being signed in 1862. It was contracted that the chiefs would be subject to the authority of a resident political agent, whose duties would involve maintaining law and order, judging cases of heinous crimes, approving the popular selection of any new chief, and exercising control over certain categories of natural resources. Khasis were guaranteed noninterference in their customary way of life, and they were not then, nor are they now, taxed. Most Khasis, as opposed to Jaintias, were never an integral part of British India, but they did undergo social change as a result of British presence. To summarize Mills (n.d.): (1) The British introduced the potato, which the Khasis rapidly took up as a cash crop for marketing as far as Calcutta. The intensive specialization exhausted the soil and made for ever-poorer crops. (2) Christian missionaries made large numbers of converts, and there arose the difficult question of whether a Christian should inherit property that traditionally was earmarked for her performance of non-Christian religious rituals. (3) About 1864 the British transferred their headquarters from Cherrapunji to Shillong. When they made Shillong the capital of the entire state of Assam, non-Khasis flocked to it, land values soared, and the concept of private property became increasingly important. Khasis began to marry with members of other ethnic groups, which introduced confusion into traditional social patterns. These problems were exacerbated during World War II, when Shillong and its environs enjoyed enormous economic prosperity. One notable aftermath of this affluence has been the accelerated enrollments in schools and colleges. Hundreds of Khasis now have the B.A., M.A., and even the Ph.D. degree. • With the Independence of India in 1947, and under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India (which was drafted by a Khasi), the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District became a Part B, or Autonomous, Tribal Area, to be governed by a District Council composed largely of Khasis and Jaintias, and responsible not to the Legislature of Assam, but to the Governor of Assam as agent of the President of India. The native-state system and the chiefs still exist, and the District Council finds it difficult to effect legislation which is neither offensive to regional custom nor a simple blueprint of ill-fitting all-India legislation. The major political schism at this time is between Jaintias, who are accustomed to centralized authority and taxation, and Khasis, who resist the notion of taxation to support the work of a central District Council. [Cf. Gait 1926; Aitchison 1931; Bhuyan 1949; Morris 1910.]

175 619 648 [726] [651] [177] 177 648 [449] [439] [134] [797] [428] [635] [633] [167] [563] [423] [973] 648 642 [651] [563] [113]

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HOUSING. Settlement pattern. Khasis live sedentarily in named, nucleated, and unplanned villages which are situated just below hill summits to avoid strong winds but still be defensible, and which usually include a de-

361 • [312]

pendable water supply. Villages are about two to five miles apart, and have no boundary markers. In the past, villages contained semipublic buildings and grounds: the home of the village priest (also the home of a chief if he resided in that village), the village marketplace, and tree groves, cremation grounds, or other awesome spots that were believed to be inhabited by supernatural beings. Villages today may have also one or more Christian churches, government social welfare buildings, and schools. Formerly, villages were entered through a guarded gateway; this is no longer the case, and paths feed into villages from all directions. Often several villages are nucleated into one large unit, named and also described as a "village." These were once defense units, but were so uncohesive otherwise that institutionalized rivalry obtained among the component villages. Now, they have been integrated through the agency of all-village public services, especially schools. **Housing.** The traditional Khasi house is entered through a door at the rounded end of a U-shaped ground plan, and is about 20 feet at widest extent; it is about 30 feet deep, and is elliptical or hogback in profile. Its walls are of stone blocks cemented with mud. The roof of grass thatch, supported by a bamboo frame, overhangs the walls on their outside, down to about three feet above the ground. The house is divided into two parts: the front one-third is on the ground level, floored either with stone blocks or tamped earth, and is used for storage of occupational instruments and as a shelter for poultry. The rear two-thirds is raised four feet on piles of stone blocks to a platform of planks, and is partitioned into six rooms, comprising a kitchen, areas for storage of food and water, and sleeping quarters. Furniture is minimal, and the house is totally undecorated. There are no windows, and no smoke vents. A house generally has a companion shed, walled of wood and grass matting and thatched with grass. This serves as a pigsty, but it may be partitioned also to house cows, and it may have a loft for fuel storage. Compounds often contain garden plots, and are fenced around with stone or bamboo and mud. Nowadays, the traditional house has given way to Western-style bungalows of wood and tin, especially in and around Shillong. [Cf. Mukherjee et al. 1941.]

ECONOMY. The Khasi economy is a market economy based on agriculture, and most Khasis are primary producers, sellers, middlemen, and/or providers of services in connection with markets. Khasis are often multioccupational: they produce goods for partial subsistence, and also play some part in trade. **Agriculture.** On the Shillong plateau, the major field crops are potatoes, maize, millets, and dry rice, still produced mostly through swidden farming, with a two- to three-year period of fallow, but increasingly through continuous use of a single field with the aid of ma-

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

rude stone monuments. At the village of Nougshai, near Shillong, are to be seen some very striking monoliths; and although they do not come up quite to the length of those at Nurtiang (noticed by Dr. Hooker in his "Himalayan Journals"), yet they are very worthy of being mentioned. They stand on the open spur just above the village, and have been worked out of the beds of the Shillong sandstone series, and some of the smaller blocks have been taken from the conglomerate beds, the lowest in the series, and which come in, in the bed of the ravine, to the north of the spur. There are a number of monuments on this site, large and small, arranged both in line and on two sides of a square; the two largest have their central monoliths—height, 24 ft. 3 in.; width, 5 ft. 6 in.; thickness, 8 in.; and height, 23 ft. 2 in.; width, 2 ft. 9 in.; thickness, 1 ft., respectively.

Plate ii., which is taken from a photograph by Mr. William Robert, Assistant Surveyor in the Khasi Hills survey party, gives an excellent idea of the second largest structure, showing the very massive flat-stone, the "Mao Kynthai," in front. This structure consisted of thirteen upright stones, which could not all be brought into the field of the camera; but the six outside stones on the right are shown. Many of the slabs in the adjacent monuments have been overthrown and broken quite recently, perhaps by Sepoys and camp followers from the military station close by. At one time a mountain battery of Eurasian Artillery was quartered there, and I attribute the overthrow of so many of the stones in the neighbourhood to their handiwork, who would look on such amusement as a "great lark." The Sepoy (native of India) is not of a mischievous disposition; the European and half-European (uneducated) is markedly so. Thus the monument with the highest stone is imperfect, and it must, when perfect, have been a very handsome one. This is a sad pity, after the time and labour that must have been expended in its erection.

I did not observe any new slabs anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood. Nougshai must formerly have been a large and powerful village; it stands on a naturally very strong position, and old lines of fortification are to be traced on many sides, especially on the approach from the direction of the Falls of the Umiam. These old lines of defence are on a curious system: a ditch and bank have been carried forward from the main defences from 200 to 300 yards down the ridge of the spurs, thus effectually preventing an enemy working round the hill sides below the villages.

This fortified site points to a state of things in these hills when the relations between the large village communities or

743 The table above clearly shows that the medical facilities obtainable in these villages are far from satisfactory. Only 6 villages out of 28 villages have a dispensary either located in the village or within a radius of five miles. Considering the lack of communication facilities and the hilly nature of the district even five miles is often too long a distance for a patient to go to the doctor or for a doctor to attend a patient. When the doctor has to cover long distances the charges become too high. As a result the poorer sections in case of serious illness have to approach unqualified medical men when one is available or otherwise to depend upon the mercy of God. Even for quinine and other cheap medicines one has to go to a dispensary or a private medical practitioner miles away. Reportedly, the more disheartening fact is that the medical help received by the people from Government dispensaries are not often timely and adequate due to non-availability of a doctor and in-adequacy of stock of medicines.

361 364 4.4 **Sanitation.**—Though conditions of housing, sanitations, etc., of the villages are described in village notes in the appendix, it will be pertinent to make some general observations on the point. Unlike other hill tribes, the Khasis select their house sites on the hill slopes and level lands by the side of the hills as a protection from winds. From the fact that the villages are situated in the slopes one might be tempted to think that the sanitary and drainage system of the villages should be quite satisfactory. But in fact it is otherwise in many cases particularly in the case of big villages where too many families huddle up constructing their houses very close to each other thus practically converting the village into a slum. Many of the villages, due to their very location in groves surrounded by thick jungles do not get sufficient sun-light and as a result always remain damp, facilitating frequent incidence of cold and influenza. People answer the call of nature in jungles and bushes in and around the villages. Many of the villages are built on level lands full of swamps, mud and tall weeds, places which provide good breeding place for mosquitoes. Cowsheds and pig sties are built close to the residential quarters which make the villages all the more dirty. Indeed, there are villages enjoying excellent sanitation and health but in majority of the villages there remains a lot to be done for improving the sanitary, drainage systems for educating the people to make their villages more hygienic. From the Government side also, elaborate measures should be adopted to combat and eradicate malaria which is still causing [312] havoc in the district. Similarly, drinking water supply schemes should receive a high priority in a programme of development.

342 4.5 **Housing.**—Majority of the houses in the interior areas are made of thatch and bamboo with wooden planking or stone or earthen floor. Walls are plastered with mud. In higher altitudes houses are lowly roofed presumably as a protection against wind and heavy rain. Some of these houses assume the shape of a half buried cylinder. They generally have only one opening through the main door, though some of them have another in their rear end. They generally contain only two small rooms. One who is not used to such conditions wonders how the inmates, especially when there are five or six of them, could feel comfortable. Houses of the well-to-do people particularly those on the road side, are built in the modern style with C.I. roofing, plank floor, mud plastered, whitewashed

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

361 In the interior of the Hills the largest villages are mere clusters of
463 huts. The great majority of the inhabitants are employed in agriculture, but there are no data upon which a proportion of agriculturists to non-agriculturists could be based.

167 There is no immigration into the District. Both the Khásiás and
178 the Syntengs have been successful in preserving to the present day their primitive isolation, free from the interference of Hinduism. They still maintain their aboriginal forms of belief and religious worship, and repudiate alike the authority of Bráhmans and the entire system of caste. To some extent, however, they have given way to Hindu prejudices in the matter of purity of food. The few Hindus to be found in the Hills are temporary residents, engaged in civil and military employ, who always contemplate returning to their own homes. The traders are for the most part natives of the Hills; for the Márwárí merchants, who penetrate into every other corner of Assam, have been able to obtain no footing in the face of Khásí competition. There is likewise no emigration from the District. The hillmen are a well-to-do and contented race, and either produce themselves or obtain by trade sufficient to satisfy their scanty wants. A certain number of both Khásiás and Syntengs proceed southwards every year to work on the tea gardens of Cáchár and Sylhet, but such absence from home is only temporary.

243 AGRICULTURE: RICE.—Thirteen different varieties of rice are cultivated in the District, of which the following is a list, giving the Khásí name as well as the description of the grain:—(1) *U-kyba-khynriam* (*u*, the masculine article, meaning 'the,' and *kyba*, noun masculine, meaning 'paddy'), brown rice with long grain; (2) *u-kyba-khynriam bai-lih*, a white rice with long grain; (3) *u-kyba la-toh*, round-grained rice; (4) *u-kyba ksai*, bearded, husked; (5) *u-kyba-dew-ba-iong*, black husked rice (literally *u* = 'the,' *kyba* = 'paddy,' *dew* = 'earth,' *ba* = 'that,' *iong* = 'black'); (6) *u-kyba-ba-lih*, white rice; (7) *u-kyba-scim*, scented rice (literally *u* = 'the,' *kyba* = 'paddy,' *scim* = 'royal'); (8) *u-kyba la-kroh*, large-grained rice; (9) *u-kyba-ba-tlang*, small-grained rice; (10) *u-kyba sa-bia*, early rice; (11) *u-kyba ru-bon*, late rice; (12) *u-kyba tang-la*, rice grown along with beans; (13) *u-kyba-ba-túh*, small rice.

Rice is cultivated in marshy fields situated near running water as well as in high lands. The first seven of the above thirteen species of rice are sown in marshy lands during the months of April and May,

101 131 Of the sub-divisions of these people, the Khasi proper (74)--1911: 120,933--live in the Khasi

74. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis (London, 1907), pp. 1 ff. about house construction pp. 30 ff.

Hills, the kindred Synteng in the Jaintia Hills. The Lynn Gam who are classified by Gurdon as half Khasi and half Garo live in the western part of the Khasi Hills, the people who inhabit the low hill country in the north of the district, which is usually called "Bhoi," are named the Bhoi. Many of them are really Mikir. My obser-
●361 vations of the Khasi are limited to the surrounding of Shillong from where I visited the village of Nongkrem which is about 13 kilometers away (75).

75. Cf. C. Becker, Anthropos 4 (1909), pp. 892-902.

The place is located in a trough between low hills which are covered by large stone boulders. A small water course runs through the village. The huts are partly built along the slopes of the hills which surround the village. The houses
342 (Plate X, 4) all stand on small plots of land which are separated from each other by low stone walls; a narrow passage leads to them from the front side. Sometimes this passage is completely missing, in which event one has to climb over the wall. The houses stand on foundations of layers of irregular stone boulders. The walls are made of wooden boards--sometimes of bamboo--and are covered on the outside by grass. Grass is also used for roofing. Each strand is tied individually to bamboo poles, as in Burma (not as in Bengal where it is squeezed together between bamboo poles). Especially typical is the form of the roof; it is high and steep in the middle and the roof ridge is curved. The roof slopes down